

Preliminary Amendment
USSN 09/03,685

Attorney Docket No.: 020245.0105

Amendments to the Specification

Please amend the specification as follows:

Page 7, between lines 11 and 12, insert:

-- According to another aspect of the invention, the O_x gas within the biological reduction chamber is agitated to increase permeation of the O_x into the material being treated. Any means of moving O_x within the chamber can be used. For example, forced air can be used to distribute the O_x evenly throughout the biological burden reduction chamber.

According to a further aspect of the invention, the O_x in the biological burden reduction chamber is maintained at a concentration of about 0.1% to about 100%, preferably 0.1% to 25%, and more preferably 3% to 16%, per total volume of gases in the biological burden reduction chamber. The amount of O_x employed depends upon the material being treated.

According to yet a further aspect of the invention, the water vapor present in the continuous stream of O_x can be controlled prior to applying the continuous stream of O_x to the material being treated.

Preferably, the pressure within the biological burden reduction chamber is maintained at a pressure between about 0 psia and 20 psia.--